

54“WE ENRICH LIVES THROUGH QUALITY PARKS AND PROGRAMS”

MINUTES

City of San Diego
Special Park and Recreation Board Meeting

June 1, 2005

Meeting held at:

City Administration Building
202 “C” Street, 12th Floor
San Diego, CA 92101

Mailing address is:

City of San Diego
Park & Recreation Board
202 “C” Street, MS 9B
San Diego, CA 92101

ATTENDANCE:

Members Present

Jim Austin, Chair
Ginny Barnes, Vice Chair
Aurora Cudal
Darlene Davies
Norman Greene
Dan Mazzella
Olivia Puentes-Reynolds (12:31 p.m. arrival)
Robert Robinson

Members Absent

Dan Coffey
Kevin Faulconer
Bob Otilie

Staff Present

Mike Behan	Ted Medina
Bill DeLoatch	Hossein Motamani
Mauro Garcia	Ellen Oppenheim
Christy Haupt	Sally Pearson
Ann Hix	April Pendera
Patty Jencks	Maria Saunders
Stacey LoMedico	Shelly Stowell
David Lugo	Tom Wood

Ms. Shannon Thomas, Deputy City Attorney, was also present.

Mr. Coffey and Mr. Faulconer gave notice that they would not be able to attend.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Austin called the meeting to order at 12:18 p.m. He thanked the Board members for their outstanding individual and group presentations before City Council on May 23. He then deferred to Ms. Oppenheim for additional comments. Ms. Oppenheim also thanked the Board for their support at the City Council meeting. She introduced Mr. Mauro Garcia, acting Deputy Director, Community Parks I Division, replacing Mr. Ted Medina, who is now the Acting Park and Recreation Director. She explained that she and staff are here today to provide support and answer any technical questions about the City Manager’s Fee Report.

Before turning the meeting over to Ms. Barnes, Chairperson of the Fee Ad Hoc Committee, Mr. Austin referenced the report that was prepared by the Fee Ad Hoc Committee whose recommendations will be reviewed here today.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

ACTION ITEMS

Adoption

101. City Manager's Proposed FY06 Park and Recreation Budget and Citywide New Fees and Fee Adjustments

Ms. Barnes reported that she, Ms. Cudal, Mr. Green and Mr. Robinson met on May 27 to review and discuss the proposed Park and Recreation Department related fees as described in the City Manager's Report. Most of the discussion was about the increased burial fees at Mount Hope Cemetery. This was first addressed approximately three years ago when a burial fee increase was proposed.

Ms. Barnes explained that all aspects of the burial process were discussed as well as personnel costs. One of the biggest concerns was that there appears to be no fee waiver program for low income families and if one was implemented, how would eligibility be determined? Ms. Barnes referred to the County of San Diego's reimbursement assistance program to the City for the Victim's Fund and for indigent burials. She would like to make sure that the reimbursement received from the County covers all expenses and is consistent with the cost of indigent burials at Mount Hope Cemetery. Ms. Barnes requested that this be added to the Fee Ad Hoc Committee report as Item #6.

Ms. Barnes turned the meeting over to Mr. Robinson who continued the discussion on increased burial fees at Mount Hope Cemetery. Mr. Robinson strongly supports no cost burials for all Veterans. He feels that because very limited space is left at the existing Veteran's Cemeteries, and in some case no space at all, that a certain number of the existing burial sites left at Mount Hope Cemetery be set aside as a Veteran's burial site. He is also recommending construction of a cremation wall to provide niches for Veterans for future use. Mr. Ted Medina, Acting Park and Recreation Director, explained that there are approximately 530 burials annually, with about 3,000 burial sites remaining at Mount Hope Cemetery. Of these 3000 burial sites, 330 are located in the Veteran's section.

Mr. Robinson would like staff to review any contracts and/or agreements with the Chinese and Muslim communities regarding the purchase of land and/or burial sites at Mount Hope Cemetery.

In response to a question asked by Mr. Robinson regarding a possible burial program through the Father Joe Carroll Charities, Mr. Medina reported that he is not aware of any formal agreement with Father Joe and the City of San Diego. Mr. Medina believes that Father Joe refers indigent burials to the County.

Mr. Medina introduced Mr. David Lugo, Mount Hope Cemetery Manager, Ms. Shelly Stowell, Senior Management Analyst, Mr. Tom Wood, District Manager, and Ms. Maria Saunders, Administrative Aide II, and explained that Mr. Lugo and Ms. Saunders are the staff whose responsibility is to provide most of the direct services for Mount Hope Cemetery. In response to the question from Mr. Robinson to review all agreements and/or contracts with the Chinese and Muslim communities regarding the purchase of land at Mount Hope Cemetery, Mr. Medina assured Mr. Robinson that he and staff will do so as quickly as possible but that it will take some time to locate and review all of the agreements/contracts, forward them to our Deputy City Attorney to review, and then prepare a final report to share at the July 21 Board meeting. Mr. Medina will direct staff to accomplish this task by the July 21 Board meeting.

To summarize, Ms. Oppenheim provided her perspective of what the Board members were requesting in regard to the FY 06 proposed fees:

Recommend approval of the fees with three modifications:

1. Eliminate the Balboa Park Botanical Building proposed entrance fee;
2. Recommend that the City Council adopt a low income fee and/or fee waiver program for Mount Hope Cemetery;
3. Request that City Council ask staff to submit both the Park and Recreation Budget and Fee Report together so they can be reviewed at the same time.

Ms. Oppenheim suggested that once the Board members have an opportunity to review additional information from staff regarding burial fees at Mount Hope Cemetery and can better understand the ramifications involved, the potential is there to go back to the City Council mid-year with additional recommendations

Discussion continued between the Board members and staff.

MOTION MOVED/APPROVED Ms. Barnes/Ms. Cudal

Ms. Barnes moved to approve the recommendations made by the Park and Recreation Board Fee Ad Hoc Committee regarding the proposed Park and Recreation FY 2006 fees and to add the following to the report:

1. Add to item #3 in report: Report on feasibility of constructing a cremation wall to provide niches for future use.
2. Add item #6 to the report: Review the current dollar reimbursement from the County of San Diego for indigent burials, and if not cost-recoverable, work with the County of San Diego to increase the reimbursement to be consistent with the costs to provide the services.
3. Add item #7 to the report: Research the cost of Veteran burials and the possibility of a reimbursement agreement with the Federal Government in order to be able to bury Veterans at no charge.

Discussion continued regarding the current burial fees at Mount Hope Cemetery for Veterans.

In response to a question from Mr. Greene, Mr. Lugo, Cemetery Manager, explained that currently there is no fee waiver at Mount Hope Cemetery for Veterans who cannot afford the burial fee. He said that most Veterans have made arrangements to be buried in a Federal Military Cemetery. He further explained that a new Veteran's Cemetery is being opened in Redding, California and there is still space available at the Military Cemetery in Riverside, California. Non-military cemeteries provide space for veterans and some include their families, but fees are charged for burials services. Mr. Lugo suggested that there could be programs through local VFW organizations that might provide assistance and could be looked into.

In response to a request to combine low income fee waivers and Veteran fee waivers at Mount Hope Cemetery together as item #7 of the Fee Ad Hoc Committee report, Ms. Barnes was clear about first wanting to wait until the Board has had an opportunity to review the full report from staff and then have an open discussion at the July Park and Recreation Board meeting about this subject.

The motion passed 5-1-0 (In favor: Barnes, Greene, Cudal, Mazzella, Puentes-Reynolds; Opposed: Robinson).

AMENDED MOTION MOVED/SECONDED Ms. Puentes-Reynolds/Mr. Greene

Mr. Greene made an amendment to the original motion by Ms. Puentes-Reynolds that was agreeable to Ms. Puentes-Reynolds. Mr. Green moved to add a third bullet point to the Fee Add Hoc Committee Report to include the following language:

“The Park and Recreation Board recognizes the plight of Veterans and their families and the inability to bury Veterans locally by seeking to

investigate the possibility of offering the Federal Government program at Mount Hope Cemetery.”

The motion passed 4-1-0 (In favor: Barnes, Cudal, Greene, Puentes-Reynolds; Opposed: Robinson). Mr. Mazzella had to leave the meeting prior to the final motion and vote. The motion passed.

ADJOURNMENT

Due to the loss of quorum, the meeting was adjourned at 1:38 p.m.

The next scheduled meeting is: Thursday, June 16, 2005

City Operations Building

4th Floor Training Room

1222 First Avenue

San Diego, CA 92101

Submitted by,

Ted Medina
Staff Representative

TM:sp

You may now access Park & Recreation Board Minutes and Agendas on our website at www.sandiego.gov/park-and-recreation/general-info/meetings.shtml#park